



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELESS BUREAU ANNOUNCES DETAILS OF INQUIRY ON TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL WIRELESS E911 ISSUES

WT Docket No. 02-46

In this Public Notice, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) announces further details of the technical inquiry to develop information on issues affecting the deployment of Enhanced 911 (E911) systems for wireless callers. The information developed in this inquiry will be used to assist the Commission in further identifying wireless E911 deployment issues, assessing possible obstacles to timely deployment, and considering methods to overcome these obstacles and accelerate deployment.

BACKGROUND

The FCC's wireless 911 rules, originally adopted in 1996, establish schedules for wireless carriers to provide both basic and enhanced emergency 911 services.¹ Pursuant to these rules, 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) that are able to utilize E911 information must request wireless carriers to implement Phase I and Phase II E911 services in order for those carriers' E911 obligations to be triggered. Under Phase I, which PSAPs could request beginning April 1, 1998, wireless carriers must provide PSAPs with a callback number and the location of the cell site receiving a 911 call.² Under Phase II, scheduled to be implemented between October 1, 2001 and December 31, 2005, wireless carriers are required to provide the capability to accurately locate 911 calls and deliver this location information automatically to local PSAPs.³ In a set of Orders adopted in September 2000 and October 2001, the Commission granted waivers to six major national wireless carriers from certain of the initial Phase II deadlines, while adopting revised, specific, and enforceable Phase II deployment schedules.⁴

¹ 47 C.F.R. § 20.18.

² 47 C.F.R. § 20.18(d).

³ 47 C.F.R. § 20.18(f) and (g).

⁴ See, e.g., Revision of the Commission's Rules to Ensure Compatibility with Enhanced 911 Emergency Calling Systems, *Order addressing Request for Waiver by Cingular Wireless LLC*, CC Docket No. 94-102, FCC 01-296 (rel. Oct. 12, 2001); *Fourth Memorandum Opinion and Order*, CC Docket No. 94-102, 15 FCC Red 17422 (2000), *recon. petition pending*. All six waiver orders are posted at www.fcc.gov/911/enhanced/.

The Commission noted that, despite the substantial progress to date, especially given the ground-breaking nature of the new technologies needed for Phase II, much remains to be done to achieve the FCC's fundamental goal of having wireless E911 Phase II capabilities deployed throughout the country. It stressed that all necessary participants must continue to work aggressively in the coming months and years to ensure that the promise of this new life-saving technology becomes a reality.⁵ The Commission simultaneously announced plans to conduct an ongoing inquiry on E911 technical issues, in order to help identify technical and operational problems in wireless E911 deployment. On November 20, 2001, the Commission announced that Dale N. Hatfield, former Chief of the Commission's Office of Engineering and Technology, would lead this inquiry.⁶

PARAMETERS OF INQUIRY

Deployment of wireless E911 requires the participation and effective cooperation of many distinct entities, including: wireless carriers; the developers of wireless location technology; manufacturers and vendors of wireless network equipment and handsets; providers of 911 service interfaces; local exchange carriers (LECs); the public safety community; suppliers of equipment and technology used to upgrade public safety facilities; state and local governments who fund and administer these upgrades; and the FCC itself. In their Phase II waiver petitions, wireless carriers often claimed that network equipment and location-capable handsets were not available in time for carriers to comply with the Phase II schedules in the Commission's rules, and equipment vendors generally supported these claims. Carriers also asserted that difficulty in obtaining the requisite LEC facilities upgrades in a timely fashion had slowed down deployment of Phase I and threatened to do the same with Phase II.

The purpose of this inquiry is to obtain an expert, informed, unbiased assessment of these and any other technical and operational issues that impact wireless E911 deployment. We anticipate that the scope of the inquiry will be as broad as appropriate to perform that assessment. Information will be gathered and evaluated from many sources, including from technology vendors, network equipment and handset manufacturers, carriers, the public safety community, and other knowledgeable sources concerning technology standards issues, development of hardware and software, and supply conditions. This inquiry also will address the provisioning by LECs of the facilities and equipment necessary to receive and utilize E911 data elements. The focus of the inquiry will be on the future of wireless E911 deployment, including any obstacles to deployment and steps that might be taken to overcome or minimize them.

At the conclusion of his investigation, Mr. Hatfield will prepare a report of his findings that the Commission expects will be released for public comment.

PROCEDURES

⁵ News Release, "FCC Acts on Wireless Carrier and Public Safety Requests Regarding Enhanced Wireless 911 Services," released Oct. 5, 2001, at 3.

⁶ News Release, "FCC Announces Dale Hatfield to Lead Inquiry of Technical and Operational Issues Affecting Deployment of Wireless Enhanced 911 Services," rel. Nov. 20, 2001.

Pursuant to Section 1.1204(a)(10) of the Commission's Rules, this inquiry is designated as exempt from the Commission's *ex parte* rules. The Commission has opened a separate docket for this inquiry, however, and parties may file relevant information to assist Mr. Hatfield in this inquiry. Comments and information submitted in the proceeding will be available to the public unless confidential treatment is sought and granted, pursuant to section 0.459 of the Commission's rules.

Comments in this inquiry may be submitted using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) by sending an electronic file via the Internet to <<http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>>. In completing the transmittal screen, parties responding should include their full name, Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket number, WT Docket No. 02-46.

Copies of submissions may be obtained via the ECFS or through the Commission's copy contractor, Qualex International, Room CY-B402, 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554 (telephone (202) 863-2893).

For further information, please contact Jennifer Tomchin, WTB, Policy Division, (202) 418-1310.

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